

## DCNR Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan

### Introduction

DCNR's mission is to conserve and sustain Pennsylvania's natural resources for present and future generations' use and enjoyment. As trustees of these resources, DCNR upholds the Pennsylvania Constitution, which states, "...the Commonwealth shall conserve and maintain them for the benefit of all the people." DCNR recognizes that our mission is best advanced by contributions from people of diverse backgrounds and inclusion of all women, men, beliefs, and cultures.

To that end, DCNR has established Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion as a top agency priority. In 2017, the department formed an interdisciplinary team made up of representatives from all DCNR's bureaus and levels of leadership. The work team is charged with guiding the agency's diversity work and making recommendations to the senior leadership team for implementation.

Areas of focus include:

- Programs and Services
- Public Lands Use and Access
- DCNR Workforce
- Internal Operations

### Background

A lack of diversity among staff and visitors is not uncommon in the conservation and environmental community, with conservation and park agencies across the country reporting diversity imbalances. A [2014 study](#) -- the State of Diversity in Environmental Organizations -- found significant progress in gender diversity; however, ethnic groups remain severely underrepresented in the conservation workforce and in leadership positions.

Within DCNR, the workforce is 75 percent male and 98.5 percent white, remaining largely unchanged for the past 20 years.

However, the face of Pennsylvania is different today than it was when DCNR formed in 1995. Between 2000 and 2010 in Pennsylvania, the white population has decreased by approximately 0.7 percent, African American populations grew by more than a million people, and the state's overall ethnic population grew by 33 percent, or about 1.9 million people.

Studies conducted on transformational change in public agencies have found that being inclusive of diverse interest groups leads to increased political capital, and in turn, increased funding. Our goal of conserving and maintaining the state's natural resources can only be strengthened by diverse thinking that comes with the differing perspectives of education, life experiences, and economic status.

### **DCNR's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategy**

To guide DCNR's diversity work, the agency team developed a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion statement, which will be visibly reinforced throughout the agency and to the public.

*To conserve and maintain Pennsylvania's public natural resources for the benefit of all people, including generations yet to come, we will take intentional action to ensure DCNR lands are accessible to all, provide inclusive and equitable programs and services, and recruit and retain a diverse workforce.*

Initial work will be focused on:

- Establishing a mentoring program for new staff
- Analyzing grant funding through environmental justice and other screening tools
- Developing a department-wide training program on diversity and inclusion
- Conducting a series of listening sessions throughout the state with organizational leaders
- Analyzing state park and forest visitor data

While these actions will help to educate and inform, the road to creating a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive department can only be achieved through intentional actions over the long term.

We will build our work by talking to all our constituents and experts in this field, and by using best practices and lessons learned from other agencies to advance a cohesive, bold strategy to meet the conservation, park, and recreation needs of the 21st century.